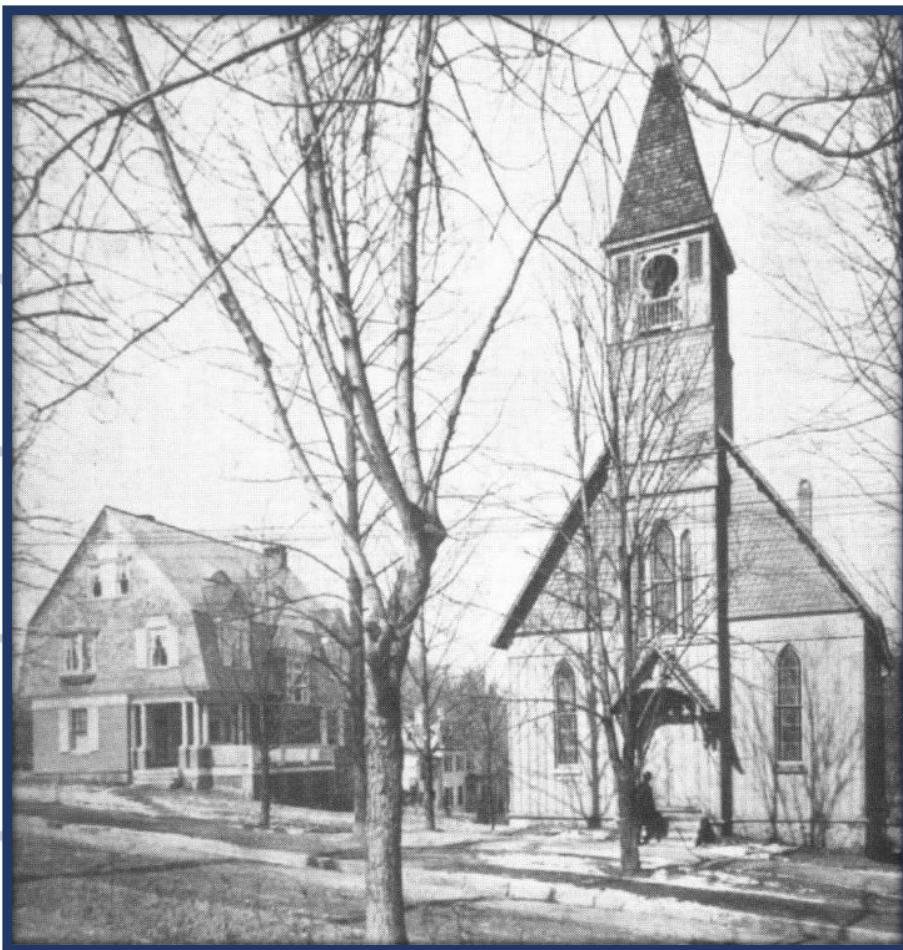


St. John's Mt. Washington presents



150th Anniversary Chamber Concert

Monday, December 4, 2017

Springwell Wesley Chapel



Featured Performers

Melody Quah, piano

Sarah Thomas, violin

Tamara Seymour, violin

Lavena Johanson, cello

St. John's Mt. Washington Leadership Team

Interim Rector - The Rev. Dr. Neil O'Farrell

Senior Warden - Sarah Fawcett-Lee

Georgia Hilliard Jay Williams Charms Worrell

Paul Kopelke Devon Holmes

Parish Administrator – Rachel Erdman



Musical Selections

*Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 78 in G major
by Johannes Brahms*

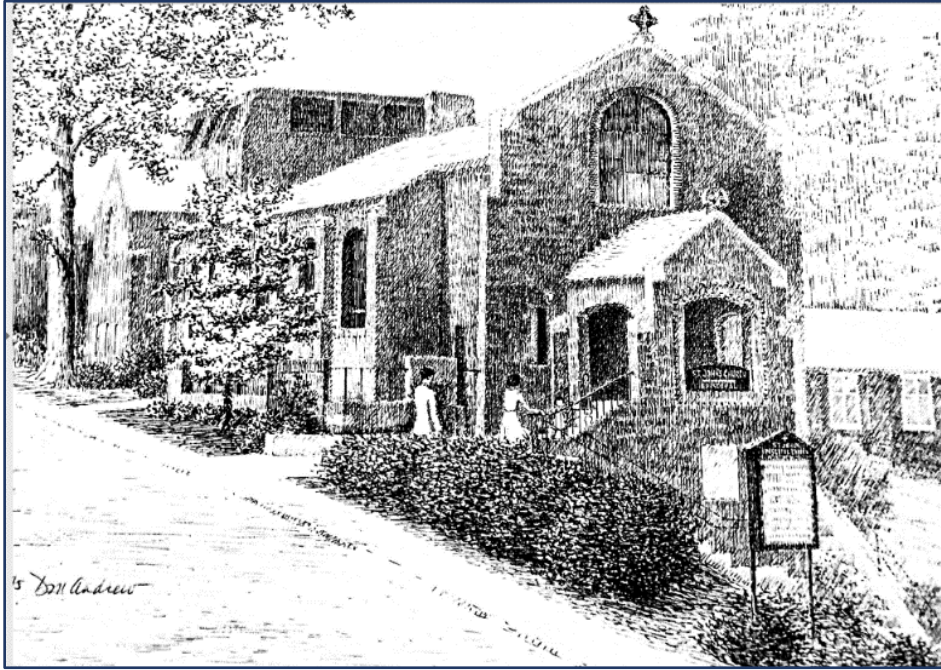
*Performed by: Sarah Jane Thomas, violin
Melody Quah, piano*



*Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 49 in D minor
by Felix Mendelssohn*

*Performed by: Melody Quah, piano
Lavena Johanson, cello
Tamara Seymour, violin*

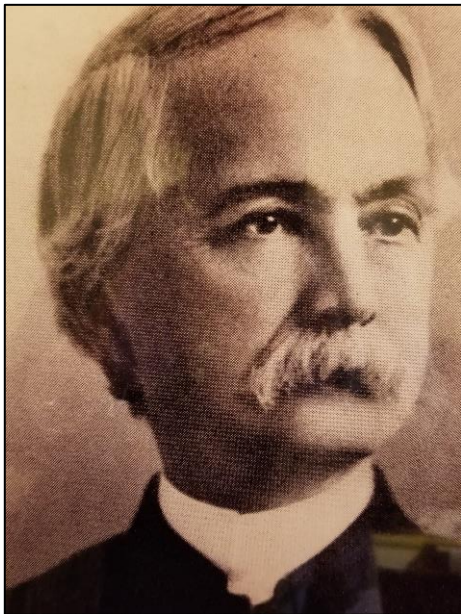
The Glorious and Quirky History of St. John's Episcopal Church, Mt. Washington



When St. John's Mt. Washington began in 1867, 150 years ago, there wasn't even a Mt. Washington to speak of. Instead, there was a small mill-town called Washingtonville, dominated by the Washington Cotton Manufacturing Company, a mill that began work in 1810 and still stands. St. John's first worship services were held back then in the Methodist Episcopal Church, because the primary denomination of church members in this still-forested, un-built rural area, some few miles north of Baltimore city, were Methodists. A telling, true story is that when the Western Run river ran high after a big rain, the priest had to wade across the creek, arriving for church services soaked. He would put on his vestments before he entered the hall, and conducted worship sopping wet.

The original Episcopal presence did not begin in earnest until 1864, when the Rev. George C. Stokes, rector of Church of the Redeemer on Charles Avenue, began to hold regular services in Mt. Washington, as this rough hamlet became known. The truth is that the history of St. John's is inextricably intertwined with Mt. Washington's growth and development since the beginning both of the neighborhood and the congregation.

Worship services were held in various palaces, such as private residences and outside in a nearby grove. St. John's itinerant status continued until the completion of the first St. John's Church in 1869. The year before, the congregation of St. John's had decided to build their



*The Rev. George C. Stokes, first rector of
St. John's Episcopal, Mt. Washington*

own church structure, started collecting funds, and had recently been recognized by the Diocese of Maryland as an independent congregation.

The Rev. Stokes had been called as first, temporary rector by the vestry of St. John's in 1867, under the leadership of Mr. John A. Nichols, a prominent member of the Mt. Washington community. Nichols had organized the purchase of the lot for the church, and worked fervently to raise funds for the erection of the building—a daunting task. Nichols was resolute that the church building should be strictly Episcopal (many persons in the neighborhood wanted the building to be

multi-denominational), and finally managed to gather enough funding for the cornerstone to be laid on April 29, 1869.

The wooden church was completed by October 1869, when the first service was held. The cost of the church, including the building, furnishings, and lot, was \$8,450. At that inaugural milestone, only about four families in the area identified as Episcopal, out of the total twenty families who lived in Mt. Washington. Blessedly, St. John's grew quickly. In an early report to the diocese, the rector stated that the congregation boasted "a Sunday School of a superintendent, twelve teachers, and seventy-seven scholars." By 1870, St. John's presented its first class of 18 confirmands to the bishop.



Interior of the original 1869 wooden church

In February 1873, the vestry called the Rev. James B. Purcell as rector—the congregation's first permanent rector. He served for eighteen years. St. John's grew steadily as the village grew. Under his charge, the communicants increased from twenty-six to eighty-six when he left the congregation. Vestryman John Carter was the founder of the Mt. Washington Improvement Association in 1885.

By the first quarter of the 20th century, St. John's had outgrown the original wooden church, which showed a lot of wear and tear after having been used for 60 years. Indeed, that original wooden building had to be held together with iron rods and turnbuckles, and when it was being demolished, the building largely just collapsed on its own into

ruddle. The red brick church building that currently commands the intersection of Kelly Avenue and South Road, was begun in 1928 with the laying of the cornerstone in a drenching downpour. Across the street was Mt. Washington trolley's car station, and the village had become a suburban commercial hub, surrounded by several close-by residential neighborhoods.

Stained-glass windows and a pipe organ were installed at St. John's church later, when the congregation could afford the expense. Most of these improvements were made during the long pastorate of the Rev. Lance Gifford. Additional work both to the interior and to repair heating and piping was necessitated after a fire that did significant damage in 1941. A succession of 20th century rectors were fortunate to lead a vibrant Episcopal congregation that boasted a Christian education program, community outreach programs, and regular Sunday worship.

More recently, in 2008, the Rev. Lori Babcock was called to lead the parish, first as priest in charge and then subsequently as St. John's rector. In 2012, St. John's, with Rev. Babcock's leadership, began an assessment process that reached the conclusion that too much time and treasure were necessary to maintain an aging brick building with a failing slate roof and expensive upkeep and utilities, in addition to being too large for the congregation. The cost of building maintenance was a severe impediment to other ministries, especially a



The Turnbull family window

vibrant, crucial outreach to the homeless, called Feed My Sheep. The decision was made to leave the old building and move to Springwell Senior Living, not far away, which had a sunny, welcoming chapel perfect for regular worship. On a ceremonious, festival Sunday, the congregation left the familiar walls of the old church building, and led by Episcopal Bishop Eugene Taylor, marched up the hill to continue weekly Eucharist at Springwell. Not one Sunday worship was missed in this momentous transition of worship, ministry, and mission.

St. John's has found its new home at Springwell. It has a congregation comprising residents of Mt. Washington and nearby neighborhoods, and loyal and lively parishioners among Springwell residents. A jewel of St. John's is a splendid music program under the directorship of Melody Quah (whose biography you can read elsewhere in this program). As St. John's celebrates its 150th anniversary, it enthusiastically looks to build on the spirit that has been evident over its long, wonderful history.



Performers

Melody Quah

Described as a “poet with titanium fingers” and a pianist who “delivers with dazzling intensity” by the *Vancouver Sun*, Melody Quah has performed across four continents. She has appeared as a soloist with the Ku-Ring-Gai Symphony and Central Coast Symphony Orchestras in Australia, the Pomeranian Philharmonic in Poland, and a variety of orchestras in Canada. She will be soloing with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Jun Märkl in 2018.

In 2012, after she performed in the Yale in New York series at Weill Hall, Carnegie Hall, the *New York Times* reviewed, “She had admirable refinement and achieved power through crisp attack and clarity.” She is a prizewinner of the 7th International Paderewski Competition held in Bydgoszcz, Poland, and won Yale’s Chamber Music Competition and Outstanding Pianist Award in 2013.

Melody is a graduate of the Vancouver Academy of Music, the Juilliard School and Yale School of Music, and graduated this year from Peabody Conservatory with a doctor of musical arts degree. Melody serves as faculty at the Community College of Baltimore County, the Park School of Baltimore, and Levine Music, D.C.



Lavena Johanson

Cellist Lavena Johanson is a commanding performer and a consummate musician. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed new and recent works at Baltimore's Evolution Contemporary Music Series. Lavena has also premiered two pieces written expressly for her by her husband, Judah Adashi, and is only the second cellist to ever perform both of Michael Hersch's Sonatas for Unaccompanied Cello in one night. Upcoming performances include a return to the Evolution Series, performing Bryce Dessner's Tuusula for solo cello (December 2017), and the world premiere of Julia Wolfe's Spinning with Maya Beiser and Melody Giron (May 2018). For more information, check out her website: www.lavenajohanson.com



Tamara Seymour

Tamara Seymour bachelor and a master degrees from the Juilliard. She has been concertmaster of the New World symphony as well as the Florida Philharmonic in Ft. Lauderdale. She is a member of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Concert Artists of Baltimore, and a substitute with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the Washington Opera Orchestra. Ms. Seymour has soloed at Alice Tully Hall in New York City, the Gardner Museum in Boston, and with the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, as well as numerous other orchestras throughout the United States.



Sarah Thomas

Violinist Sarah Thomas performs and teaches in the Baltimore area. She has appeared on the Evolution Contemporary Music Series, performed in Peabody's new music ensemble Now Hear This, and recorded for singer/songwriter Dave LeMieux at Ardent Studios. A chamber music enthusiast, she works and performs with over a dozen groups each year. Sarah is also a member of the newly formed Peabody String Sinfonia, a group of students and alumni who perform enthusiastic concerts in the community. An invested violin teacher, Sarah teaches lessons, group classes, and chamber music privately and at the Chamber Encounters Music Academy. She is currently pursuing her master degree in violin, after receiving a bachelor degree in violin performance last May.



Come Worship
With Us!

10:30 AM Sundays



*Special Thanks to Phil Golden
and the staff & residents of
Springwell Senior Living, who
generously provided space for this
event and Sunday worship and
refreshments after the concert!*

